

How to Become a Section 8 Landlord

The Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) enables individuals and families of low income to obtain safe, clean, and affordable housing from the existing supply on the private rental market. HUD provides funding and general guidelines for the program. The issuer of the voucher can choose to make additional rules and may have procedures that differ from those in this document.

The voucher subsidy is available for single-family houses, doubles, duplexes, apartments, condos, farms, and mobile homes. The tenant seeks the housing of their choice, while the program provides for direct, person-to-person contact and a lease between the owner and tenant. The owner may use the same selection criteria as for private market tenants.

The owner continues as a private property owner in all respects, plus they receive the additional security of the voucher subsidy paid directly to them by the Clinton Township Housing Commission. The tenant's portion is a percentage of their net household income. A security deposit of up to one and a half month's rent may be charged and is paid by the tenant.

An owner may evict a tenant for good cause, the same as a private market tenant. Proper written notice to the tenant and Clinton Township Housing Commission is required.

When a tenant seeks to rent a unit, they will have all the necessary paperwork to initiate the process, including:

- Voucher
 - This verifies the tenant's eligibility in the program and the number of bedrooms for which they are qualified.
- Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA)
 - This is a packet of forms to be completed by the owner and signed by the owner and tenant. The paperwork is not excessive and only takes a short time to complete.

When the tenant returns the RTA packet to our office, the process begins...

How the process works

As part of the determination of unit eligibility, the following steps must be completed before the owner receives the voucher subsidy for the unit:

ELIGIBILITY

- The tenant must locate a unit that they desire to occupy for one year or longer. The owner and tenant must complete the "Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA)" and submit it to the Clinton Township Housing Commission office at 34947 Village Road, Clinton Township MI 48035.

APPROVAL

- The Clinton Township Housing Commission will review the rent requested by the owner to determine if it falls within program guidelines. If the requested rent exceeds program guidelines, we will notify the owner and tenant, in writing, of the maximum amount that we will approve. If the owner will not accept the rent, the tenant will be notified to resume their housing search. If the rent submitted is within the program guidelines, the process continues.

INSPECTION

- The Clinton Township Housing Commission will schedule an inspection of the unit for compliance with HUD's "Housing Quality Standards" (HQS.) In depth minimum requirements can be found at <http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/hcv/forms/guidebook.cfm>. Once at this site, choose chapter ten, "Housing Quality Standards." There is also a quick-start, general checklist entitled "HQS inspection checklist" available elsewhere on this website. Individual Housing Commissions can tighten the requirements, so check with the Housing Commission where your prospective tenant received their voucher to find out if there are additional requirements. If there are items in need of repair or correction the owner will be notified of those corrections that need to be made. The owner will be given 30 days to do so. If the owner decides not to make the repairs, Clinton Township Housing Commission office is to be notified so the tenant may resume their housing

search. HQS Inspections are also conducted yearly once the tenant moves in. Certain deficiencies are considered to be life threatening, and must be corrected within a 24 hour period.

LEASING

- Before or during the inspection and repair process, a sample lease is forwarded by the owner to the Housing Commission where it is reviewed. Once the Clinton Township Housing Commission's Section 8 inspectors have verified that all repairs are completed, the lease can be signed by the owner and tenant, and a copy given to the Clinton Township Housing Commission. A Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) contract is also reviewed and signed by the owner and the Clinton Township Housing Commission.

PAYMENT

- The effective date of the lease and contract determines when payment is effective. To receive the first Housing Assistance Payment, the Clinton Township Housing Commission must have:
 - Approved unit inspection;
 - Lease and contract signed by owner and tenant;
 - Proof of ownership.

Owner Responsibilities

- Comply with Fair Housing laws and be consistent with tenant selection criteria.
- Comply with all terms and conditions of the lease with the tenant.
- Comply with all terms and conditions of the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) contract with the Clinton Township Housing Commission.
- Maintain property taxes and insurance.
- Maintain property and make repairs in a timely manner.
- Give tenant proper notice before entering the unit.
- Allow tenant "peaceful enjoyment of the property."
- Report any illegal activities to the proper authorities and the Clinton Township Housing Commission.
- If lease renewal is not desired, give proper written notice to the tenant and the Clinton Township Housing Commission.

Program Benefits

Owner Benefits

One of the reasons for Housing Choice Voucher Program's success is that our property owners have taken the time to learn the program rules and recognize the benefits of becoming a participant. Over the years, many owners and property managers have come to appreciate the advantages of having a contracted monthly assistance payment, as well as inspection standards. Keeping your property consistently well maintained helps to ensure its resale value and also makes it easier to "lease up" again, if a tenant does move out.

The Housing Choice Voucher Program has introduced many novice property owners to key property management principles in the areas of tenant selection, tenant retention, and lease enforcement. It has also helped some landlords to develop better building maintenance skills.

Tenant Benefits

The program has remained successful because it provides individuals and families with the opportunity to choose the type of rental unit and neighborhood that meets their needs. Unlike project-based assisted housing programs, tenants can take their voucher with them. This flexibility has enables many individual and families to pursue employment and educational opportunities, and to move out of unsafe neighborhoods. Owner participation is essential to making these opportunities a reality.

How to become a Section 8 Owner

If you are interested in becoming a participating owner with the Section 8 program, we recommend that you place a free ad on the www.michiganhousinglocator.com website, and check off the box the states that you will accept section 8 rentals. This will allow section 8 participants from other Housing Commissions access to your property information as well as those from the Clinton Township Housing Commission. Please keep in mind that the families have been determined eligible based on their income only. It is the owner's responsibility to screen the families who contact you for suitability. Once you have approved a family for rental of your unit, they will have the necessary paperwork that needs to be completed to start the process.

How Rents Are Approved

Once a family has selected a unit that they would like to rent, the family and the landlord will complete a Request for Tenancy Approval packet. Once this packet has been completed and returned to the Housing Commission, the process begins.

DETERMINING RENT REASONABLNESS

- The address of the selected unit is entered into the rent reasonableness section of the www.michiganhousinglocator.com website.
- The data base will provide us with unassisted comparable units in the same census track.
- The landlord's contract rent and utilities must not be higher than an unassisted comparable.
- If the rent is reasonable, the process continues.

DETERMINING 40%

- The family's share may not exceed 40% of the family's monthly-adjusted income when the family initially moves into the unit or signs the first assisted lease for a unit.
- If the family is not over their 40% amount the process continues.

IF THE RENT IS APPROVED

- If the unit meets both tests of rent reasonableness and the family's 40% amount, the rent is approved and the unit is scheduled for inspection.

IF THE RENT IS DISAPPROVED

- If the unit does not meet both tests, the landlord and tenant will be informed that the rent needs to be lowered. If the landlord agrees to lower the rent the unit will be scheduled for inspection.
- If the landlord does not agree to lower the rent, the family will be scheduled to come into the Housing Commission office to get another Request for Tenancy Approval packet to continue their housing search.